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ABSTRACT

This action research project implemented and evaluated a program for enhancing students' social skills in order to increase their ability to work cooperatively and to resolve conflict. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten students in a lower income urban school, located in a medium-sized Midwestern city. The problem of insufficient social skills was evident from teacher observations and the frequent need for adult mediation. Analysis of probable cause data revealed several contributing factors, including frequent exposure to violence and lack of role models for resolving conflict. Faculty also reported insufficient language experiences and opportunities to interact socially with others prior to entering kindergarten. A review of solution strategies suggested by professional sources and educational literature resulted in the selection of 3 interventions over a 4-month period: explicit teaching of social skills, the use of a violence prevention program, and the application of cooperative learning strategies. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in students' social skills, ability to work cooperatively, and ability to resolve conflicts. (Seven appendices include a teacher observation chart and student and parent surveys. Contains 47 references.) (Author/HTH)

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ENHANCING STUDENT SOCIAL SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

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Abstract

This report describes a program for enhancing students' social skills in order to increase their ability to work cooperatively and resolve conflict. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten students in a lower income urban school, located in a medium sized Midwestern city. The problem of insufficient social skills has been evident through teacher observation and the frequent need for adult mediation.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed several contributing factors. Residing within a community with frequent exposure to violence has influenced the manner in which students handle conflicts. A lack of role models is also a contributing factor. Faculty reported insufficient language experiences and opportunities to interact socially with others prior to entering kindergarten.

A review of solution strategies suggested by professional sources and educational literature, resulted in the selection of the following three interventions: explicit teaching of social skills, the use of a violence prevention program, and the application of cooperative learning strategies.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in students' social skills, abilities to work cooperatively, and resolve conflicts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem 1

Immediate Problem Context 1

National Context of the Problem 9

CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence 12

Probable Causes. 19

CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review 24

Project Objective and Processes. 31

Project Action Plan 31

Methods of Assessment 43

CHAPTER 4 - PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention 44

Presentation and Analysis of Results. 52

Conclusions and Recommendations. 59

REFERENCES 62

APPENDIX A 66

APPENDIX B 68

APPENDIX C 72

APPENDIX D 75

APPENDIX E 78

APPENDIX F 83

APPENDIX G 85

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted kindergarten classes have shown an inability to resolve conflicts, work cooperatively with others, and express their feelings verbally. This is evident through teacher observation and the frequent need for adult mediation.

Immediate Problem Context

Research is being conducted in three classrooms located at the same site. These classrooms will be identified as Classrooms A, B, and C.

School Description

The school is located in a medium size city in the Midwest. It sits in the heart of the city's largest federal housing project. The three story brick structure stands out from the projects as one of the few buildings free of gang symbols and graffiti. This building is designated as a Title I School.

The building was constructed in 1901 with additions built in 1922 and again in 1949. Due to a growing community in 1959, a third addition was built to provide more classrooms. Numerous windows originally graced the building's exterior. However, many were bricked over in the 1970s to conserve energy which gives the school an appearance of isolation. The interior of the building was freshly painted in 1991. The walls throughout the school are filled with murals

illustrating storybook characters and other scenes. All of the hallways are colorful and decorated to warmly welcome those who enter.

The total enrollment in the school is 476 students. The racial ethnic background is 93.7% Black and 6.3% White. Low-income students account for the total population. Student attendance rate is 92.9% with the rate of mobility of the students at 53.3%. Chronic truancy is 11.8% with chronic truants numbering 53. The average class size is 23 students at the kindergarten, first, and third grade levels (School Report Card, 1997-98).

The school serves pre-kindergarten through fourth grade students. The building houses two pre-kindergarten, four kindergarten, five first grade, three second grade, three third grade, and three fourth grade classrooms. In addition, there are six self-contained special education classes.

The school employs 65 people of whom 40 are certified. Of the staff, 27 are classroom teachers with an average of 7.1 years experience in the district. Five teachers have master's degrees and seven are currently enrolled in an advanced degree program. Other certified staff include: a physical education teacher, a science teacher, a part-time music teacher, a part-time computer teacher, a speech and language pathologist, and a resource teacher for children with learning disabilities. Additional support staff includes: a librarian, three Title I aides, four custodians, and six part-time cafeteria employees. Six teacher assistants provide support in the pre-kindergarten and special education classrooms. The office staff includes: a principal, one full-time and one part-time secretary, and a home school facilitator. The pupil personnel services office is located in the school and is comprised of two school psychologists, two social workers, a nurse, and a

secretary. One of the city's major hospitals provides an in-school health facility. A full-time registered nurse, a physician's assistant, and a counselor are available to the students, families, and staff during school hours. The YMCA provides two part-time employees to supervise a before and after school latch key program. Female employees account for 89.2% of the staff while 10.8% are male. The racial ethnic background of all employees at the school is 0.8% White and 29.2% Black.

The school has 31 classrooms, a music room, and a science room. There are two computer labs. One lab services kindergartners and first graders, and the other is available to second through fourth graders. The school also has a library, a parent resource room, and a teacher's lounge. The large gymnasium has a stage at one end. Physical education classes are scheduled around the lunch hours because the gym also serves as the cafeteria. The site has an in-school postal system. This is overseen by a teacher and is fully operated by students. Third and fourth graders are encourage to apply for postal jobs, interview, and are then paid for various positions. Also available at the school is a general education diploma program for adults. This is a federally funded program and provides child care for the participants.

In addition to the many components of the building, the classrooms are well equipped with resource materials. Each room has at least two computers with one or two printers. Other technology available to the staff includes: two laptop computers, three laser disc players, several televisions and video cassette recorders, a video camera, a digital camera, and a computer scanner.

Many opportunities are provided to the students both academically and for enjoyment. Several community sponsors support these programs. Some involved

groups include: the local university, a nearby high school, The Boys and Girls Club, a girl scout troop, and the local cooperative extension office. Many teachers are also involved with after school activities such as music, drama, and art club. Basketball is available and often the team competes against a neighboring primary school. For students needing help academically, a reading program called Lightspan is offered as well as tutoring in specific subject areas. The school's Parent and Teacher Organization meets twice a month. Family nights are held once a month to encourage parental involvement. These nights are theme centered and provide parents with ideas and activities to do with their children. Dinner is usually served at these events.

The Adopt a School program is another feature that fosters community involvement. The local civic center provides free tickets to cultural events at their facility. The Kiwanis and labor council members volunteer monthly to read as well as listen to students read. Field trips, sponsored by a local steel company, allow students opportunities to see the importance of a good education in the working world. In addition to these Adopt A School partners, several members of the community volunteer time to the school. The participants are trained and dedicated individuals. The volunteers tutor students several times a week at all grade levels.

Classroom Descriptions

Classroom A

Classroom A is located at the far end of the first floor hallway. It is arranged with a variety of centers and small tables for group work. A large carpeted area in the middle of the room is used throughout the day for whole

group activities. Along one wall is a center with three computers. The students rotate every 15 minutes throughout the day to work on a computer literacy program. Two additional computers on the opposite wall provide students additional practice in math and writing. Curriculum is covered through the use of themes. Approximately 50% of the day is spent working in cooperative and base groups with hands-on activities. The remaining instructional time is divided equally between whole group and individual work. The children's work is prominently displayed throughout the room. Classroom A consists of 20 children and 1 teacher. Ten special needs students are included during physical education, music, and science with the help of a special education teacher and an aide. Community volunteers individually work with eight of the students twice weekly on pre-reading skills.

Classroom B

Classroom B is centrally located directly across from the school office and is one of the few air-conditioned classrooms in the school. There is a two-stall bathroom located in the rear of the room, as well as a coat closet. The room has a carpeted area for large group activities, and children can sit at tables to work individually or in small groups. Several centers can be found around the perimeter of the room which encourage students to play dramatically, to experiment with manipulatives, to engage in sensory exploration, to create art projects, and to listen to taped stories and songs. Three computers are available throughout the day for student usage. Walls are print-rich with numerous visual aids to enhance learning. In addition, classroom rules and inspiring slogans are displayed. Twenty students are actively engaged in large and small group instruction. Cooperative learning has been recently implemented in the classroom as a learning strategy. Community

volunteers tutor 10 students each week in pull-out sessions for 20 minutes in a one to one situation. These volunteers have been trained to teach the students beginning literacy skills to the students.

Classroom C

Classroom C is located on the first floor. The walls are print rich and are decorated with the students' creative artwork. There is one window in the classroom that looks out onto the blacktop playground and the housing project. The room is completely surrounded with bulletin boards and has chalk boards on opposite sides. The tables are arranged around the perimeter of a large rug area. The rug is used for whole group instruction and circle time in the mornings. Small tables are located throughout the room and are used for learning centers and cooperative learning activities. The learning centers include: writing, listening, reading, computers, table toys, dramatic play, creative art, investigation (math and science), and sensory exploration. Math objectives are taught and explored through hands on manipulatives. Reading, language, and writing are centered around unit themes. Twice a week for 20 minutes fifty percent of the students are tutored in phonemic awareness. Classroom C consists of 20 children and 1 teacher.

Community Description

The environment around the school is set apart from the city's businesses, medical services, cultural activities and shopping malls. There is residential housing that surrounds the housing project. Businesses within walking distance of the school are a beauty shop, liquor store, seasonal ice cream shop, and several taverns. A public park is also within walking distance. A branch of the public

library is housed across the street from the site. Public transportation is readily available to area residents, and a bus stop is located in front of the school.

The unit school district is comprised of 14 primary schools, 12 middle schools, and 4 high schools. The total number of students is 15,303. The district also has an early childhood center for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade students. A magnet school for the fine arts provides services to kindergarten through eighth grade. A middle school for the academically gifted is available to fifth through eighth graders. According to the most recent District Report Card, the student's racial ethnic background is 52.7% Black, 43.6% White, 1.9% Hispanic, 1.7% Asian, and 0.1% Native American. Parental involvement within the schools is reported to be 92.4% in this district. District student attendance rate is 92.4% with a mobility rate of 32%. Chronic truants number 1,006 which accounts for 6.8% of the student population. The high school dropout rate is reported to be 14.6%. The district services a student population from which 55.9% are low-income and 1.2% are limited English proficient. The district employs 1,042 teachers; 75.4% are female and 24.6% are male. Ninety-two percent of the teachers are White, 7.0% Black, 0.4% Hispanic, and 0.4% Asian. The teaching staff averages 15.3 years of experience and 50.5% hold a masters degree or above while 49.4% have a bachelor's degree. The average teacher in the district earns $38,725 while the average administrator earns $66,483. The district spends $6,492 per year to educate each student. The pupil teacher ratio at the elementary level is 21.1:1, and it is 8.7:1 at the secondary level. The average composite score of the students taking the ACT is 22.8, and the high school graduation rate is 73.6% (School Report Card, 1997-98).

The public school district serves a community with a population of 112,900. It is located on a major river approximately 150 miles southwest of one of the largest cities in the United States. The community has access to major interstate highways as well as a regional airport. Communication reaches the city via the local affiliates of the four major television stations, a daily newspaper, and numerous radio stations.

Choice of education is provided to the community through several private elementary schools and two private high schools. Higher education is offered by a private university, a junior college, a vocational school, and a medical school. The medical school operates in conjunction with one of two hospitals located downtown. A third hospital is located in the northern part of the city and operates a health education center as well. In addition to these health services, the city also has a mental health facility.

For the residents interested in fine arts, the city supports a ballet company, an opera company, a symphony orchestra, a municipal band, two theater groups, and a museum of the arts and sciences. A downtown civic center has both a theater and an arena. This arena is home to a hockey team as well as the local university's basketball team. For other recreation, residents enjoy a planetarium, a zoo, and thousands of acres of parks. The city also offers several golf courses, an indoor ice rink, and a sports complex. There are several movie theaters and shopping malls. Residents from the city as well as communities around the area enjoy a riverboat casino and two professional sports franchises.

The 1990 census reports the per capita income in the city as $14,039 and the median income in all households is $26,074. Of all families with children under 18 years old, 25% live below the poverty level.

National Context of the Problem

Children today are more unruly, angry, depressed, lonely, impulsive, aggressive and prone to worry than ever before. There seems to be a worldwide decline in children's emotional intelligence (Roseman, 1999). Children too often feel helpless, hopeless, and powerless (Berreth & Berman, 1997). Teachers have experienced more behavior problems in schools for the past several years. These problems are showing up in even the earliest years of school (Mason, 1998). The aggressive and disruptive behaviors put the children at serious risk if they are unable to maintain close relationships and establish themselves within their peer culture (Hartup, 1999). These behaviors can also show up as bullying and teasing. This creates a climate of fear in which other children have difficulty learning and in which the teacher struggles to teach (Froschl & Gropper, 1999). According to a recent study, 40 percent of classroom bullies grow up to be felons if there is no intervention (Holden, 1997).

Schools experience conflicts daily among the students. Many of these students do not know how to handle conflicts effectively (Stevahn, D. W. Johnson, R. T. Johnson and Real, 1996).

> Many kids are unable to share or negotiate for what they want; they are unable to consider the other person's point of view. They assume hostile intent; they believe the other person is intentionally causing them shame, embarrassment, or ridicule (Holden, 1997).

Social and emotional skills need to be taught in the early years but enough attention has not been given to these skills (Mason, 1998). People not trained to recognize the feelings of stress and anger will act on those feelings and react to others exhibiting those feelings. This can result in violence because the people involved cannot break the conflict cycle (Brendtro & Long, 1995). Being able to recognize feelings and talk about them is important, but it does not happen by itself (Barovick, 1998). Children tend to think about themselves rather than others (Carter, 1997).

Boys are especially at risk. Our society teaches a "boy code" which seems to prohibit them from being warm and empathetic. Boys are encouraged to break away from their mothers emotionally too early in life. This break can leave them emotionally undernourished (Barovick, 1998). Boys as young as four years of age exhibit awareness of this expectation. They do not want to be held or show signs of affection in public. Boys must struggle with their need for affection and society's expectations for them. When boys are forced to abandon these positive emotions they are only left with negative ones. Boys want attention and to feel they belong but do not know how to express that desire. One reason boys turn to gangs is it provides them with the sense of belonging (Kantrowitz & Kalb, 1998). Children must have physical affection to be emotionally healthy. If they are deprived of this they are at risk of being unable to develop positive relationships (Garbarino, 1997).

American society has changed greatly in a short amount of time (Meckler, 1998). By the time children reach the age of eighteen they will have been faced with more moral decisions than most people from the previous generation encountered their whole lives (Woodson, 1997). Children are no longer shielded from adult problems as they previously were. They are vulnerable to the negative society around them. Over the past 30 years there has reportedly been a 50 percent decrease in the amount of time children spend involved in constructive activities with their parents. This lack of parental supervision leaves the children much more vulnerable to outside influences (Garbarino, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

A variety of data collection tools were used to obtain documentation. A teacher observation checklist (Appendix A) was used to record student behavior during cooperative learning activities. Students completed a student survey (Appendix B) to record their feelings about various social situations. A test was given to document students' ability in the areas of identifying and labeling emotions expressively and receptively (Appendix C). Sawyer's Test of Awareness of Language Segments (TALS) (Appendix D) was used to assess students' language experiences. Parents were asked to complete a parent survey (Appendix E) to give the researchers information about children's social experiences outside of school. Only one parent survey was not returned.

A teacher's observation checklist was developed to document students' ability to resolve conflicts, use appropriate social skills, and work cooperatively. Classroom teachers agreed to observe the children in four areas: listening to others without interrupting, sharing materials without fighting, completing their own job, and talking appropriately with group members. The checklist was used twice a week for three weeks. Students were observed during cooperative activities. The students were rated

according to how often the teachers observed the targeted behaviors: three--often, two--sometimes, and one--seldom. One lesson presented did not require students to share materials; therefore, they were not scored in that skill. The total number of observations varied due to student absences. A summary of the observations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Observations August 30, 1999 Through September 17, 1999

Classroom A N=14

Social Skills	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Listens to others	29	30	19
Shares with others	38	24	16
Completes their job	50	14	14
Talks appropriately	38	30	10
Totals	155	98	59

Classroom B N=15

Social Skills	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Listens to others	54	10	15
Shares with others	46	10	11
Completes their job	53	11	15
Talks appropriately	55	9	15
Totals	208	40	56

Classroom C N=14

Social Skills	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Listens to others	66	2	6
Shares with others	72	1	1
Completes their job	73	1	0
Talks Appropriately	71	2	1
Totals	282	6	8

Classrooms "A" and "B" had difficulties in all four areas. Classroom "C" had some problems in "listening to others". In classroom "A" no child received a rating of "often" for every skill during the three weeks. Nine of the students received "seldom" ratings in one or more skills. Classroom "B" had one child who received a rating of "often" for every skill during the three weeks. Seven of the students received ratings of "seldom" in one or more skills. Classroom "C" had seven students who received ratings of "often" for every skill during the three weeks. Six students received "seldom" ratings in one or more skills.

The parent survey indicated 71% of students wanted to share belongings when asked. The remaining 29% did not want to share but would when asked. This disagrees with the teacher observation which indicates 13% of the targeted students have difficulty sharing.

In order to document students' ability to express feelings, a student emotions test was developed. Students' expressive skills were tested by asking them to verbalize emotions in six different drawings. Children were then tested receptively by asking them to point to the face that showed the following emotions: happy, sad, angry, lonely, frightened and confident. All six faces (Appendix F) were displayed at one time. This test was given prior to the start of the intervention. Sad was an acceptable answer for lonely, and happy was an acceptable answer for confident.

Table 2

Student Ability to Expressively and Receptively Identify Emotions.

Classroom A N=14

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively	Correct Responses Expressively
Happy	14	12
Sad	10	12
Angry	11	12
Lonely	7	8
Frightened	9	3
Confident	9	12

Classroom B N=15

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively	Correct Responses Expressively
Happy	12	5
Sad	5	5
Angry	13	2
Lonely	12	2
Frightened	8	1
Confident	0	0

Classroom C N=14

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively	Correct Responses Expressively
Happy	14	14
Sad	7	9
Angry	10	9
Lonely	6	3
Frightened	5	11
Confident	6	13

Students scored significantly higher when tested receptively than expressively. Happy and angry were the most easily identified emotions. Six students correctly chose the six emotions when tested receptively, while no students correctly labeled each emotion expressively. It is felt that a lack of vocabulary skill was contributory to performance in this area.

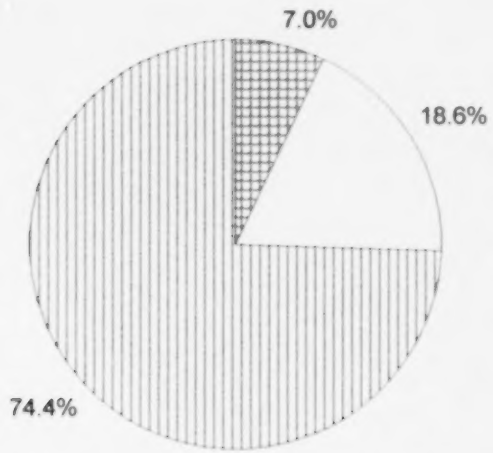
The TALS test was administered to the students. This test is designed to assess students' ability to segment spoken language into words, segments, and phonemes. These skills develop through language experiences. The TALS evaluates the level of language development and cognitive development for the student's appropriate age level. Students' performance on the TALS may be considered a reflection of

cognitive-linguistic maturity (Sawyer, 1987). The TALS combined scores for all three classrooms are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Sawyer's Test of Awareness of Language Segments (TALS)

(Score of 0-11, 74.4%: Score of 12-17, 18.6%: Score of 18-26, 7.0%)



Seven percent of the students received a score of 18-26. This placed them in the high performance category. A score of 12-17 is considered an average score with 18.6% of the students falling into this category. The remaining 74.4% fell into the low performance category with scores ranging form 0-11. The TALS has been administered at the school for six years with similar results.

The TALS is an important tool for the teacher. This information tells the teacher where each child is in his or her language development. Being able to communicate their feelings with the appropriate language skill has to be taught. Verbal mediation, talking to a peer or talking out loud to guide oneself in problem solving, is thought to be important to the significant shift in thinking which occurs between the ages of five and seven (Second Step, 1991).

Probable Causes

Students who have not acquired the appropriate skills to resolve conflicts, work cooperatively with others, and verbally express their feelings will have difficulties in resolving conflicts in life. Throughout our lives, from infancy to death, we are faced with daily conflicts. A missing pencil, cutting in line, being pushed or shoved, or sometimes something as simple as one person taking another's favorite toy in the classroom are some of the issues students encounter. Many students are unable to share or verbally negotiate for what they want or need (Stevahn, D. W. Johnson, R. T. Johnson & Real, 1996). Children have difficulty resolving conflicts when they lack knowledge of appropriate behaviors and have not had techniques for resolving conflicts modeled for them (Second Step, 1991).

There are many reasons why students lack the appropriate social skills. Issues such as lack of language stimulation at home, absence of role models, violence in the family, and violence on television contribute to this

deficit (Elias, Bruene-Butler, Blum & Schuyler, 1997; Meckler, 1998). Parents also do not spend time engaging their children in constructive, cooperative activities which are the primary ways students learn social skills (Garbarino, 1997 & Hill, 1995). A deficit in social skills can be due to lack of knowledge of skills or insufficient occasions to practice the skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998).

Seventy-one percent of students in the study did not participate in any organized social activity, such as theBoys and Girls Club. Kantrowitz & Kalb (1998) report Black boys are especially vulnerable because they are more likely than White boys to grow up in homes without a positive male role model, such as a father. The targeted school population is 93.7% Black. Sixty-five percent of boys in the study are in single parent households, as reported in the parent survey. A lack of adult supervision often contributes to a deficit in problem-solving skills. This deficit interferes with the students' ability to solve everyday problems (Second Step, 1991).

Society bombards students with images of violence. The media suggests that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts and to treat people with disrespect and sarcasm is represented as funny (Burke, 1999). Television often displays violence as acceptable. Research shows viewing such shows causes children to act more aggressively (Second Step, 1991). The data collected from the parent survey indicates 33% of the children

prefer television viewing over other activities. Students are often left at home unsupervised to watch violence on television. This is evidenced through the conversations that the teachers and the students have about their activities outside of school. Permitting children to watch violence on television contributes to behavior problems (Smith, 1992). "Even cartoons are violent, and it has been shown that children who watch them consistently are more aggressive than their peers" (Brendtro & Long, 1995).

Ninety-nine percent of the population of the students at the targeted school are considered low socioeconomic, as defined by federal guidelines. In addition, 78% of the students live in high density, public housing. High density public housing is a known risk factor for increased violence. Living in this type of environment can cause prolonged stress. Children can adopt defensive behavior to deal with the stress (Brendtro & Long, 1995). Within this environment students witness much violence on the streets and within their own homes. Children often know people involved in illegal activities and they may see these people as having power (Second Step, 1991).

Many of our students have witnessed adults handling conflicts by shouting or hitting.

> We are learning that witnessing violence firsthand or being informed in great detail of violent incidents can have almost as traumatic an impact on children as their being victimized. The

stress of this trauma can affect both long-term and short-term child development in a number of ways (Jackson, 1997).

Experiencing such trauma may cause students to lower their self-image, become developmentally delayed, or experience impaired emotional development. Such trauma may also have a negative affect on their relationships with others. Children living with violence have a feeling of powerlessness and do not feel in control of their lives, and this may cause them to view others as a threat (Berreth & Berman, 1997; Murdick & Gartin, 1993).

Identifying emotions is a necessary step in managing emotions (Palomares & Cowan, 1998). Emotions impact behavior even when a person does not realize it. Becoming aware of one's own emotions allows the brain to evaluate the situation (Goleman, 1995). Students' learning environment is affected by their ability to understand each others feelings. Without being able to read another person's emotional cues, a child can not anticipate that person's behavior and prepare an appropriate response (Prizant & Meyer, 1993). Minor social issues, such as insults, sarcasm, and put-downs, can easily escalate to violent behavior when children have not been taught social skills (Burke, 1999).

Many studies indicate a relationship between language skills and social skills because language skills play a critical role in social interaction (Brinton & Fujiki, 1993; Prizant & Meyer, 1993). Language is a primary means by which we make interpersonal contact, form relationships, socialize our children, regulate our interactions, and mediate concepts of ourselves and others as social beings (Gallagher, 1993). According to our

student survey, 26% of our students have negative feelings about talking to others.

> Words are the only tool we have for systematically turning our attention and awareness to the feeling within us and for describing and reflecting upon our thoughts and behaviors. When we inwardly sense an idea we cannot articulate, we struggle to find meaning for ourselves. The effective use of words constitutes the first step toward developing the ability to grasp previously unspoken feelings and behavior. Feelings, after all, lead people to marry, seek revenge, start wars, create great works of art, and commit their lives to the service of others. They are vital and compelling (Palomares & Cowan, 1999).

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Educators have responsibility to teach the skills needed for students to function effectively in society. There are skills needed beyond academic skills. Schools must teach children how to get along with others and adapt to a changing society (Whalley, 1995). Values and social skills traditionally have been taught at home. When home instruction does not take place social skills must be addressed in the schools. Teachers have many opportunities to model, teach, and encourage such values as: kindness, patience, respect, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, fairness, and trust. These universal values have an importance to all of us (Hill, 1995). Some form of value or character education is now being taught in schools in all 50 states. In 1998, the Federal Department of Education spent $5.2 million on these school programs. That figure was expected to increase during the 1999 school year. Evaluations of these programs have been inconclusive so far. Participating schools are encouraged by the belief that these programs are having an impact on the classrooms and the schools as a whole (Ferguson, 1999). Students have the best chance of

learning social skills when the teachers place the same emphasis on them as academic skills. The skills should be presented in small components, modeled for the students, practiced, and reinforced (Cummings & Haggerty, 1997). Amitai Etzioni (1997) believes there are two skills necessary as a foundation in character education, empathy and self-discipline. Children can learn these skills through direct instruction, modeling, experience, and practice. Teaching these skills should begin at the preschool level. Social skills can be practiced and enhanced by using everyday problems and conflicts (Berreth & Berman, 1997). Kohn (as cited in Gaines, 1999) believes children must be worked with in order to grow into decent adults. It is as important to examine what the children do as well as why they are doing it.

Language plays an important role in developing social skills. Being able to talk about feelings and emotions facilitates a child's ability to manage them (Kuebli, 1999; Marion, 1997). Talking to a child about feelings should begin at the toddler stage even though the child is barely verbal (Levine, 1998). Children as young as one year old should be given the basic vocabulary to express feelings such as: happy, sad, and mad (Handler, 1998). Children first begin to use words to express their emotions at 18 to 20 months of age. Between the ages of two to three years this vocabulary increases. Children also begin to label emotions in themselves and others and to identify the cause for the emotion. By the age of four children identify more complex emotions. They also develop the understanding that people can have different feelings about the same event. Four year olds demonstrate an awareness of social standards

regarding controlling emotions. When verbally communicating emotions, it is believed that a child can be distanced enough from the situation to allow for evaluation of emotions and the consideration of the causes and consequences. When a child is given enough time to evaluate the situation, he may find a socially acceptable way to respond (Kuebli, 1994). The more opportunities children have had to discuss their feelings and the feelings of others, the more likely they are to be caring and affectionate towards others (Buzzelli, 1992).

Teaching social skills and verbalizing feelings are components of a conflict resolution program. These programs teach anger management, cooperation, and problem solving (Handler, 1998). The need for this program in the schools is evidenced by the Departments of Education & Justices having developed and distributed 40,000 guides to conflict resolution (The Clinton Administration, 1998). Conflicts happen every day and most often they happen between friends (Hartup, 1992; Holden, 1997). A child feels confident and in control when he/she is able to settle conflicts and negotiate a satisfactory compromise. This reduces frustration and gives confidence to handle everyday problems. The amount of on task time in the classroom increases when children can resolve conflicts on their own (Handler, 1998; Holden, 1997). Children practice being empathetic to one another (Devlin, 1999). When they begin to look at things through someone else's eyes, they develop perspective (Greenberg, 1992; Stevahn, D.W. Johnson, R.T. Johnson & Real, 1996). Conflict resolution programs also teach children to recognize what happens to their bodies when they are involved in a conflict. Children then learn

and practice techniques to help calm themselves down. It is important to practice techniques when they are not upset so they can remember what to do when faced with a conflict (Handler, 1998). After practicing in a safe environment, students are then ready to act responsibly and make informed decisions. Students are empowered and become part of the solution (Berreth & Berman, 1997).

Students from cooperative learning classrooms are reported to have higher self-esteem, exhibit more social skills and score higher on academic tests (Stahl, 1994). Friendships are more likely to develop as the children learn to work together. Students in cooperative learning classrooms show more support to their peers and are better at conflict resolution (Slavin, 1991b). Conflict resolution is more successful when taught in a cooperative environment (Stevahn, D.W. Johnson, R.T. Johnson, & Real).

Slavin (1991b) states there are two essential elements for successful cooperative learning: group goals and individual accountability. Johnson and Johnson list five characteristics that distinguish cooperative learning from group work. These characteristics are: face to face interaction, individual accountability, cooperative social skills, positive interdependence, and group processing (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991). Stahl (1994) reports several key elements in effectively using cooperative learning. These goals also include a group goal that is clearly defined, an interdependency among group members, individual accountability, and a reward. He also includes the elements of heterogeneous groups, focusing on and developing positive social interaction, sufficient time with the same group, face to face interaction, equal opportunity for success, and

reflection. Stahl emphasizes the need to use cooperative learning frequently and correctly to see long term results.

Slavin (1991a) believes groups should be rewarded when all members succeed. This gives students an investment in the success of all group members. It also helps to develop an interdependency. Bellanca and Fogarty (1991) also agree that a reward in some form should be given. However, Kohn (1991) disagrees with the use of rewards in cooperative learning. He feels rewards undermine the process of cooperative learning and the interest in the task. Children can feel controlled by the reward. The expectation of being evaluated can take away from doing the task and children should perform behaviors for their own sake. Slavin (1991a) on the other hand, believes rewards are motivating. They can focus the children on teaching each other rather than sharing answers.

Bellanca and Fogarty (1991) state many teachers use a combination of approaches to cooperative learning. This allows them to find what works best with their style of teaching and for their students. The elements of cooperative learning chosen for this intervention are: instruction in social skills, group goals, individual accountability, heterogeneous groups, face to face interaction, and reflection.

John Dewey (as cited in Simpson, 1999) believed education requires interaction and can not be solely academic. Learning to work together is essential to our society. Experts in the field of cooperative learning agree that social skills are needed to work effectively in groups. However, not all of the experts explicitly teach these skills in their cooperative learning models. Kagan and Slavin (as cited in Bellanca &

Fogarty, 1991) both allow the development of these skills to happen naturally as the students work together. Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991) disagree, they feel the instruction in social skills is critical to the cooperative learning experience. Bellanca and Fogarty include both formal and informal instruction of social skills in their model. Students need to understand the importance of the skill, how to recognize it, and when the skill should be used. Social skills need to be practiced.

Students of the targeted school exhibit a lack of social skills. Therefore, the explicit instruction and practice of these skills were selected as an intervention strategy. Success in this area should not be left to chance. In the cooperative learning activities, students will work in groups of two or three to help one another master the targeted social skills. The targeted skills include: interpersonal behavior, peer-related social skills, teacher-pleasing social skills, self-related behaviors, assertiveness skills, and communication skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Interpersonal behavior involves friendship-making skills. Working within a cooperative learning environment, students learn to like each other and will start to develop friendships. They will offer to help each other, share their personal items and apologize for something they may have done. Peer-related social skills relate to the student's emotional state. This is the skill that teaches students to become empathetic to one another and to accept their peers. Teacher-pleasing social skills include following directions, listening to the teacher and doing their best job. Self-related behaviors allow the students

to assess a social situation, reflect on the situation and choose the appropriate solution for the problem. This is where the students utilize all the strategies that they have learned to deal with a stressful situation while controlling their anger. When children learn assertiveness skills, they do not need to resort to aggression. Communication skills involve: students taking turns, listening responsively, and giving feedback to the speaker. The benefits to the child from participating in a cooperative classroom activities is well known (Kotloff, 1993). Each child will develop a sense of responsibility and self control through practice of the targeted social skills. By developing their cooperative learning skills, students learn how to resolve conflicts constructively. It is important for students to learn how to negotiate integrative agreements based on an understanding of both their own and the other person perspectives (Stevahn, D.W. Johnson, R.T. Johnson & Real, 1996). Because cooperative learning nurtures positive peer relationships and structures positive interactions, students in cooperative learning classrooms develop more pro-social behavior, more positive peer relationships, and stronger scholastic aspirations (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991).

Rewards for group work will not be addressed formally during the intervention. Praise, stickers, certificates, and other forms of rewards are already used within the targeted classrooms. Cooperative learning activities will focus more on reflection within groups than on rewards. Through reflection time the students will reward each other with their successes.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of explicit instruction in social skills and conflict resolution, during the period of September 1999 to December 1999, the kindergarten students of the targeted classes will increase their ability to work cooperatively and decrease their need for adult intervention to resolve conflicts. In order to accomplish the project objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Explicit instruction of social skills.
2. Implementation of the Second Step: A Violence-Prevention Curriculum.
3. Development of cooperative learning lessons to provide practice of social skills.

Action Plan for the Intervention

Week 1	Targeted Skills:	Listening, Verbal, Empathy
Sept. 1	Theme:	All About Me
	Cooperative Learning:	Whole group activity, pass the teddy bear and tell something about yourself.
	Reflection Activity:	Introduce the Group Reflection Log and reflect with the whole group.
Week 2	Targeted Skills:	Listening, Verbal, Empathy
Sept. 7	Second Step:	Lesson 1 - Empathy Training

		Lesson 2 - Feelings
	Theme:	All About Me
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Dancing Balloons, to create a friend and interact with him in a gentle way.
	Reflection Activity:	Graphic Organizer - T-chart Ask the questions, "How did you feel dancing with your balloon?" and "How would you feel if your balloon had popped?"
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - The Mirror Game, watch your partner and do as they do and then switch roles.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 3	Targeted Skills	Listening, Verbal, Empathy
Sept. 13	Second Step:	Lesson 3 - More Feelings Lesson 4 - Same or Different
	Theme:	All About Me
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Feather Painting, to

		become familiar with the concept of gentleness and to experience relaxation.
	Reflection Activity:	After the activity, each person in the group will tell how they felt during the activity and stick their feather in the styrofoam ball to create a "feathered friend". The "feathered friend" will later be used to remind students to be gentle with their friends.
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Matching Face Game, match faces with different emotions.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 4	Targeted Skills:	Physical Proximity, Listening
Sept. 20	Second Step:	Lesson 5 - Feelings Change
		Lesson 6 - If - Then
	Theme:	Mud
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Make mud pies
	Reflection Activity:	Graphic Organizer, pie chart
		Ask the questions, "Who likes

		making mud pies?" and "Who does not like making mud pies?"
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Miss Mary Mack (hand game)
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 5	Targeted Skills:	Physical Proximity, Listening
Sept. 27	Second Step:	Lesson 7 - Not Now - Maybe Later
		Lesson 8 - Accidents
	Theme:	Mud
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Shake Shake Shake, to help form friendships.
	Reflection Activity:	Circle of friends, each child will add a friend's name to the circle until the circle is completed.
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Potion Lotion, don't touch your partner, this is to control body motion.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 6	Targeted Skills:	Sharing, Physical Proximity
Oct. 4	Second Step:	Lesson 9 - What is Fair?
		Lesson 10 - I Feel....When....
	Theme:	Pot

	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Peas Porridge Hot (hand game)
	Reflection Activity:	"I feel" statements. The teacher will write down the "I feel" statements on peas and each student will put the pea in the purple pot.
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Sound Web (with the letters Mm and Pp) One person will cut and the other will glue.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 7	Targeted Skills:	Sharing, Listening, Verbal, Physical Proximity
Oct. 11	Second Skills:	Lesson 11- Listening Lesson 12 - I Care
	Theme:	Bugs
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Hug a Bug, to encourage friendships. To have fun touching in an appropriate way.
	Reflection Activity:	To create a large caterpillar bug with statements from the students on how to be a friend.

	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Create a bug (patterning)
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 8	Targeted Skills:	Verbal, Sharing, Listening, Physical Proximity
Oct. 18	Second Step:	Unit II Lesson 1 - Slow Down Lesson 2 - What Is The Problem?
	Theme:	Bugs
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - (3 in a group) Create a human graph, ask the question, "Do we need bugs?"
	Reflection Activity:	Journal writing, tell why you like bugs or why you do not like bugs.
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Jump or Jiggle (poem), have students role play. Make mask of animals, one student will color, one will cut out the animal face, one will talk about the animal.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 9	Targeted Skills:	Sharing, Verbal, Listening, Physical Proximity, Responsibility

Oct. 25	Second Step:	Review Week
	Theme:	Halloween
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Song, "Tillie the Witch", make Tillie the Witch. Each person is responsible for making part of Tillie's body.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Make a paper bag pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern. One person makes the nose, one person makes the eyes and one person makes the mouth.
	Reflection Activity:	Make a class graph of the group faces (scary, sad and happy).
Week 10	Targeted Skills:	Responsibility, Sharing, Verbal, Listening
Nov. 1	Second Step:	Lesson 3 - What Can I Do? Lesson 4 - Choose an idea
	Theme:	Apples
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Sequence numbers one through ten, one person will color the apples, one person will cut the apples

		and one person will put the apples in sequential order.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 11	Targeted Skills:	Sharing, Verbal, Responsibility
Nov. 8	Second Step:	Lesson 5 - Is It Working?
	Theme:	Apples
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Apple Friendship necklace ABC pattern, red, yellow, green
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 12	Targeted Skills:	Empathy, Sharing, Listening, Verbal
Nov. 15	Second Step:	Lesson 6 - Sharing
		Lesson 7 - Taking Turns
	Theme:	Nuts
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1- Read the story Henny Penny. Re-tell the story by role playing in large group, in small groups use a paper puppet to describe how you would feel if you were Henny Penny.
	Reflection Activity:	Write about your favorite character in the story.

	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 - Sequencing the Henny Penny story One person will color, one will cut, and one will glue the picture in sequential order.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 13	Targeted Skills:	Sharing, Empathy
Nov. 22	Second Step:	Lesson 8 - Trading
	Theme:	Thanksgiving
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 Build a replica of a shelter that the pilgrims would have lived in. Collect materials from outside, each person in the group collects a different object for the shelter, each person is responsible for adding their collection of objects to the structure.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Week 14	Targeted Skills:	Listening, Physical Proximity, Verbal, Sharing, Responsibility
Nov. 29	Second Step:	Lesson 9 - Paying Attention

		Lesson 10 - Interrupting Politely
	Theme:	Community Helpers (hats)
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1
		Stacking Hats, someone sits, someone stacks the hats on the person's head, one person records, then trade roles (three times).
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2
		Hat of sounds, have objects that begin with the letters H, P, and T in the hat, each person will choose an object and decide what letter the object begins with and add it under that letter, H or P or T, each person will have a letter.
	Reflection Activity:	Make a hat sorting book.
Week 15	Targeted Skills:	Listening, Sharing, Verbal, Physical Proximity,
Dec. 6		Responsibility
	Second Step:	Unit III Lesson 1 - Am I Angry?

		Lesson 2 - Calm Down
	Theme:	Community Helpers (caps)
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 - Patterning Each group will create their own pattern with the caps, then come back to the whole group and explain their pattern to the group.
	Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
	Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 -People Search Associate the person with the hat with the picture of the tool that the person would use and have them signed their name on the line.
	Reflection Activity:	Whole group reflection, make a list of other tools that community helpers could use.
Week 16	Targeted Skills:	Verbal, Empathy, Sharing, Responsibility, Listening,
Dec. 13		Physical Proximity
	Second Step:	Lesson 3 - Dealing with Being Hurt Lesson 4 - Dealing with Name

	Calling
Theme:	Christmas
Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 1 Christmas sorting activity, things that are associated with Christmas and things that are not associated with Christmas. One person will color, one will cut, and one will glue.
Reflection Activity:	Group Reflection Log
Cooperative Learning:	Lesson 2 Make a group gift to give to someone in the building (example principal, cafeteria worker, librarian etc.).
Refection Activity:	Journal Writing, How do you feel about giving someone a gift that you helped to make?

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the interventions:

1. Prior opportunities for social interactions will be documented through the use of a parent survey.
2. Students will complete a pre and post survey in order to record their feelings about social interactions.
3. A group reflection log will be utilized to asses cooperative learning activities and the need for teacher intervention.
4. The teacher will use a teacher observation checklist to document progress in social skills.
5. A test to assess the children's ability to identify and label emotions expressively and receptively will be administered.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase the students' ability to work cooperatively without the need for adult intervention to resolve conflicts. A 16 week intervention was initiated to effect the desired changes. The explicit instruction in social skills, the implementation of a violence prevention program, and the use of cooperative learning were strategies used to bring about changes.

The same intervention plan was followed in each of the three kindergarten classrooms. Cooperative learning lessons complimented unit themes developed by the kindergarten teachers. Specific social skills were targeted each week to be taught and practiced. Two formal cooperative learning lessons were presented each week to allow practice in the targeted social skills, with the exception of shortened weeks when only one lesson was presented. Each lesson was concluded with a reflective activity. Lessons increased in length and required more social skills as the

intervention progressed. The social skills targeted included: listening, verbal skills, empathy, physical proximity, sharing, and responsibility.

The Second Step Violence-Prevention Curriculum was implemented to enhance the instruction of social skills. Empathy training, anger management, and conflict resolution were presented and practiced with this program. A 16 week intervention period did not allow for completion of the Second Step Curriculum. Approximately two Second Step lessons were presented each week with a total of 26 lessons completed.

The first three weeks of intervention were during the *All About Me* unit. Students learned gentleness through interacting with a teddy bear and a balloon. The teddy bear was passed around a circle as each student in the class told something about himself. Next the children created a balloon friend (Rice, 1995). After dancing with the balloon, they expressed their feelings about the activity and how they might have felt if the balloon popped. The *Mirror Game* was the first opportunity students had to cooperate with a partner. During the game students mimicked their partner and then reversed roles. Gentleness was reinforced through the *Feather Painting* (Rice, 1995) activity. Students used a feather and imaginary paint to paint their partner and then roles were reversed. The lesson was concluded with each child placing his feather in a styrofoam ball as they verbalized their feelings. The final activity for this unit was the *Matching Face* (Finch, 1990) game. Students were required to combine their individual work into a single product for the first time. Four pictures depicting different emotions were cut in half. One partner colored the left

half and the other partner colored the right half. They then glued their halves together to form a face.

The fourth and fifth weeks of intervention were devoted to a unit on *mud*. Students cooperated with their partners to create a mud pie. Partners were faced with having to make joint decisions in gathering the material and creating a final product. A pie graph was created recording who likes making mud pies and who does not like making mud pies. The *Shake, Shake, Shake* (Rice, 1995) activity involved students forming two circles, one inside the other, facing each other. While singing a song students shook hands. They then rotated the circle and repeated the song. A paper circle of friends was then created with each child adding someone to the circle by selecting a name.

Emphasis in the sixth week was on sharing and physical proximity. They learned and participated in the hand game *Peas Porridge Hot*, in conjunction with our *Pot* unit. The students verbally expressed their feelings about this activity as the teacher wrote their responses on paper peas and placed the peas in a purple pot. Next the students participated in a cooperative learning activity that consisted of sorting pictures that began with the M and P sound on a web. The students were engaged in a decision making of which picture belonged on the *M* web and which belonged on the *P* web.

During the *Bug* unit, weeks seven and eight, the students were encouraged to make friendships. The students participated in a game called *Hug a Bug* (Rice, 1995). Fun music was played. When the music stopped each student would find another student to hug until the music

resumed and then they would start dancing again. Students had fun while learning how to touch each other in an appropriate way. A large caterpillar was created with statements from the students on how to be a friend. The following cooperative group activity was making a bug pattern with two colors. Students were asked the question, "Do we need bugs?". A human graph was developed from their responses. In their journal writing, the students expressed why they like bugs or why they do not like bugs. The *Jump or Jiggle* (Harcourt Brace, 1999) activity was the final lesson for this unit. Participating in groups of three, for the first time, students made animal mask and role played the *Jump or Jiggle* poem.

In celebration of Halloween the students learned the song *Tillie The Witch* (Thomas). The students created their own version of *Tillie the Witch*. Each person within groups of three, was responsible for making part of Tillie's body. The second cooperative lesson for this unit was making a paper bag pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern. Each group decided if their face was scary, sad, or happy. A class graph of the pumpkin faces was made. The graph was read to see which face the class liked the best. This concluded week nine of the intervention.

Weeks 10 and 11 of the intervention were during a unit on *apples*. Both weeks were shortened weeks for the students; therefore, only one cooperative lesson was presented each week. Students worked in groups of three to place numbered apples in sequential order. Each group member had an assigned job. Groups of three were also used to create an apple friendship necklace. In each group, one member had red apples another

had yellow apples and the last member had green apples. Together they strung them on a piece of yarn in an ABC pattern.

A fall unit on *nuts* focused around the story *Henny Penny*. During week 12, students used role playing to retell the story. In small groups of three to five, students used a paper puppet to describe how they would feel if they were *Henny Penny*. At the end of the week students cooperated in groups of three to place story pictures in sequential order. Group members' jobs included: coloring the pictures, cutting out the pictures, and gluing them in consecutive order.

Week 13 was the week of Thanksgiving. Students had only two days of school and a feast was held on one of those days. Preparation for the feast did not allow time for the intervention for the week to be carried out. The Second Step lesson was completed the following week.

Students were involved in a *Community Helper* unit during weeks 14 and 15 of the intervention. The first cooperative activity required a student to sit while another student attempted to stack occupational related hats on a friend's head. A third student recorded how many hats were successfully stacked. Students rotated position until each group member had a turn to try each job. Totals were then compared as a whole group. During the *Hat of Sounds* activity, three group members were each responsible for a different targeted letter of the alphabet. Group members took turns pulling pictures out of a hat and then deciding who had the letter the beginning sound matched. The groups used colored paper caps to create a pattern and then each group explained their pattern to the

whole class upon completion. A *People Search* (Appendix G) was used for the first time in the *Community Helper* unit. Eight students wore different community helper hats. The remainder of the students had a list of tools used by community helpers. They needed to find the community helper that used each of the tools in their job and have them sign on the line by that tool. The activity was repeated until each student had a chance to be a community helper.

The final week of intervention focused on Christmas. Cooperative groups of three sorted, cut, colored and glued pictures associated with Christmas verses pictures not associated with Christmas. The last cooperative activity of the intervention allowed students to work in groups of three to create a gift. They then chose an adult in the school to give the gift to. After giving their gift, students wrote in their journals about how they felt about giving a present to someone.

Another important part of the intervention was the Second Step curriculum. The curriculum is divided into three units. Each lesson provides opportunities for children to role play real life situations and practice the skills taught. The first unit is *Empathy Training* which was covered during weeks one through seven of the intervention. Students learned to recognize feelings of others through facial and body expressions. They are taught that people can feel differently about the same things. In addition, they learn that feelings about particular situations may change over time. For example, a child may be afraid the first day of kindergarten. However as students make friends, they look forward to coming to school. Students learned the difference between intentional and unintentional

actions. Children practiced predicting how others might feel in different circumstances. Students learned to communicate their feelings and listen to the feelings of others.

The second unit in the Second Step program teaches children impulse control. With the help of two puppets, "Impulsive Puppy" and "Slow Down Snail", students learned to recognize problems, brainstorm solutions, and evaluate those solutions. Good solutions are ones that are safe, fair, and will probably create the desired result. Through role playing students learned to choose the best solution, try it out, and reevaluate if that solution does not work. Emphasis was placed on stopping to think things through when faced with a problem. Listening attentively and interrupting politely were also presented in this unit. Songs are included with the Second Step program to reinforce the concepts taught. Unit II was covered during weeks 8 through 14 of the intervention.

Unit III enabled the students to recognize anger through their own body language and body language of others. They learned that it was okay to feel angry sometimes but their reactions needed to be non-aggressive. Angry behavior such as pushing, hitting, kicking, etc., was not acceptable. Specific instructions were taught in order to help the students recognize and manage their anger. They were taught to say to themselves:

1. How do I feel?
2. Calm down:

   take three breaths.

   count slowly to five.
3. Say "calm down"

4. Talk to a grownup about my feelings (Second Step, 1991).

Only the first four lessons of Unit III were covered during weeks 15 and 16.

Classroom A began the intervention with 14 students returning permission slips to participate in the research. Due to the high mobility, an additional ten students entered the classroom but were not included in the study. Of the 14 students in the study, only 10 were still enrolled at the end of the intervention period. Three children transferred to other schools as a result of moving. One child was placed in a self-contained special education classroom.

Initially, there were 17 students enrolled in Classroom B. However when the intervention was implemented in September, only 15 students had returned permission slips. By November, three students were added due to the constant influx of new students. Additionally, two students from within the school were transferred into Classroom B. Although these seven students were included in the intervention process, they were not included in the intervention statistics. Three students moved, therefore only 12 students remained upon completion of the intervention project.

Classroom C began the school year with 17 students. Fourteen of the 17 had returned their permission slips for the research project. During the year, six new students were added to the classroom and two students moved away. Classroom C had thirteen students who completed the intervention.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess students' progress in resolving conflicts using appropriate social skills and working cooperatively, teachers compiled data from the teacher's observation checklist completed the final three weeks of intervention. Those results were compared to the observations made prior to the onset of intervention. During the initial observation students were observed twice a week for three weeks. Observations for the final three weeks were only recorded once each week. Students who moved during the intervention were not included in the posttest results.

Table 4

Comparing Teacher Observations

Classroom A N=14 August 30, 1999 Through September 17, 1999

Classroom A N=10 November 29, 1999 Through December 17, 1999

Social Skills	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Listens to others	29 **22**	30 **4**	19 **0**
Shares with others	38 **21**	24 **2**	16 **3**
Completes their job	50 **23**	14 **1**	14 **2**
Talks appropriately	38 **21**	30 **2**	10 **3**
Totals	155 **87**	98 **9**	59 **8**

Classroom B N=15

Classroom B N=12

Social Skills	Often		Sometimes		Seldom	
Listens to others	54	**31**	10	**2**	15	**3**
Shares with others	46	**36**	10	**0**	11	**0**
Completes their job	53	**36**	11	**0**	15	**0**
Talks appropriately	55	**33**	9	**0**	15	**3**
Totals	208	**136**	40	**2**	56	**6**

Classroom C N=14

Classroom C N=13

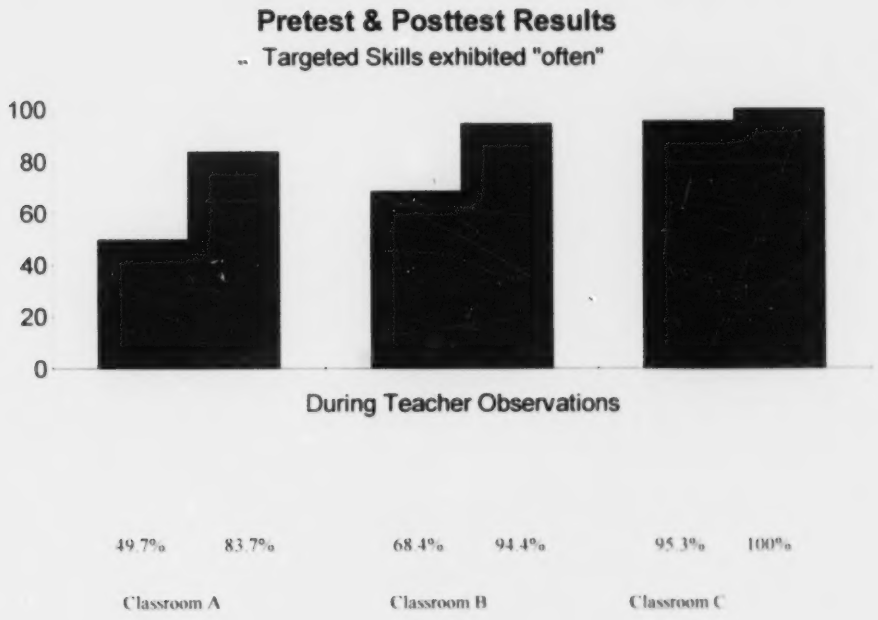
Social Skills	Often		Sometimes		Seldom	
Listens to others	66	**39**	2	**0**	6	**0**
Shares with others	72	**39**	1	**0**	1	**0**
Completes their job	73	**39**	1	**0**	0	**0**
Talks Appropriately	71	**39**	2	**0**	1	**0**
Totals	282	**156**	6	**0**	8	**0**

All three classrooms showed a considerable improvement in the targeted social skills. Classroom A exhibited improvement in all four areas. Pretest observations showed an "often" rating 49.7 percent of the time. In posttest observations students received an "often" rating 83.7 percent of the time. The most significant improvement was shown in the area of listening to others.

Classroom B pretest observations showed an "often" rating of 68.4 percent of the time. In posttest observations students received an "often" rating 94.4 percent of the time. The students in classroom B showed improvement in all four areas.

Classroom C pretest observations showed an "often" rating of 95.3 percent of the time. Posttest observations rating in the "often" category occurred 100 percent of the time. The most substantial improvement was the social skill of listening.

Table 5



This graph reflects the data shown in Table 4. Students' progress in expressing emotions was assessed by comparing results from the pre and post tests for Identifying and Labeling Emotions.

Table 6

Comparing Student Ability to Expressively and Receptively Identify Emotions.

Pretest Classroom A N=14

Posttest Classroom A N=10

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively		Correct Responses Expressively	
Happy	14	**10**	12	**9**
Sad	10	**10**	12	**10**
Angry	11	**8**	12	**10**
Lonely	7	**8**	8	**8**
Frightened	9	**9**	3	**6**
Confident	9	**9**	12	**9**

Pretest Classroom B N=15

Posttest Classroom B N=12

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively		Correct Responses Expressively	
Happy	12	**12**	5	**12**
Sad	5	**12**	5	**12**
Angry	13	**12**	2	**12**
Lonely	12	**12**	2	**11**
Frightened	8	**12**	1	**11**
Confident	0	**12**	0	**12**

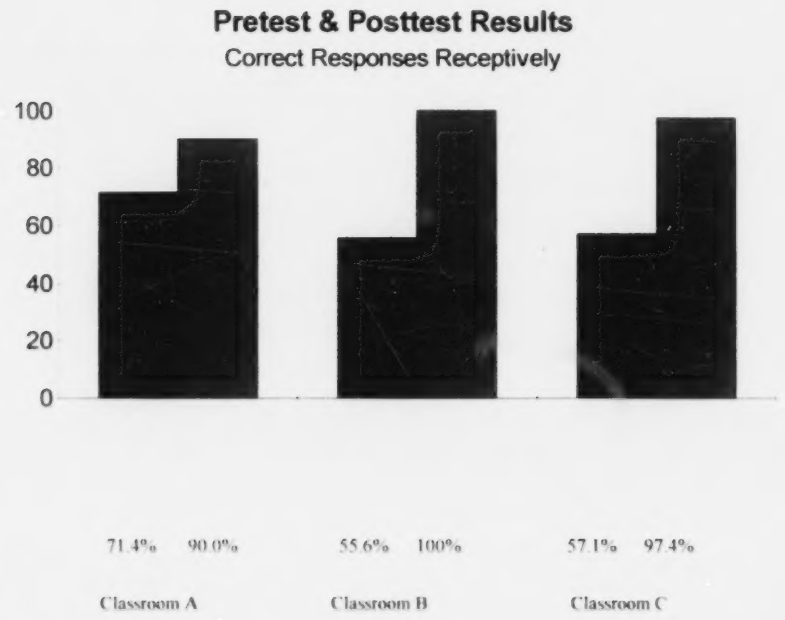
Pretest Classroom C N=14

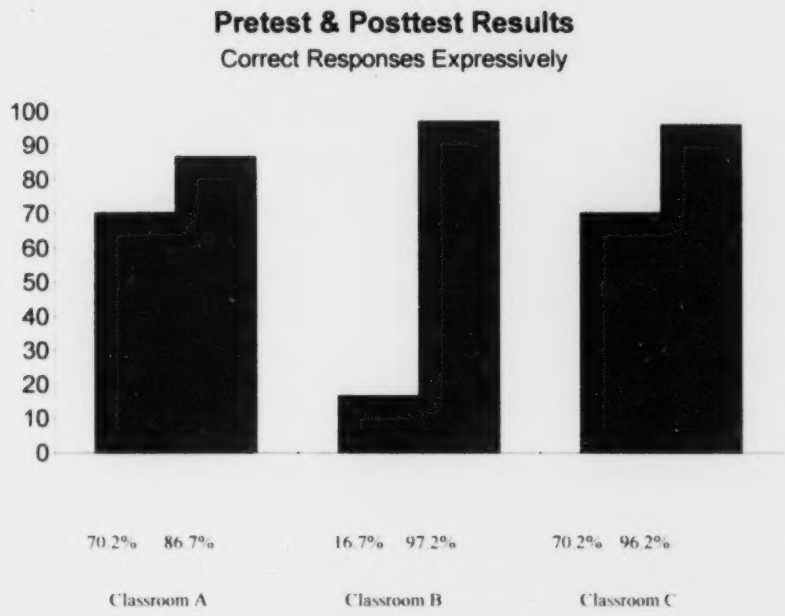
Posttest Classroom C N=13

Emotions	Correct Responses Receptively		Correct Responses Expressively	
Happy	14	**13**	14	**13**
Sad	7	**13**	9	**11**
Angry	10	**12**	9	**13**
Lonely	6	**13**	3	**12**
Frightened	5	**13**	11	**13**
Confident	6	**12**	13	**13**

Large gains were seen in each of the three classrooms. Classroom B showed the largest improvement. Students achieved 97 percent accuracy or better when tested receptively in classrooms B and C. Similar results were recorded when tested expressively with students achieving 96 percent accuracy or better. Classroom A showed slightly lower results with 90 percent receptively and 87 percent accuracy. In pretests classroom A showed no real variance between scores receptively and expressively. However, classroom B and C had large differences in scores. After the intervention all classrooms reported similar results in their receptive and expressive scores. Beyond numbers though, as teacher researchers we saw tremendous changes in the classroom environment and student interactions.

Table 7





These graphs reflect the data shown in Table 6.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The teacher researchers saw, by analyzing data, that the intervention strategies had a positive impact in all three classrooms. Student comments indicated their desire to work in cooperative groups. Students were observed encouraging and helping one another throughout the day not just during structured cooperative activities. Students normally mature and become more socially skilled during kindergarten. However, all three classrooms progressed towards those skills faster and with more success than in previous years.

The teacher researchers agree that four elements of the intervention were key in its success. First, a small number of social skills were targeted.

The skills were taught, modeled, and practiced continually. Emphasis was placed on the social skills in the classroom. Opportunities for successfully using the social skills were presented often. Secondly, students were led step by step through the elements of conflict resolution. Again, these skills were taught, modeled, and practiced. Students were not only taught the steps but the language skills necessary in resolving conflicts. Another key element was for the students to work in cooperative groups. Interdependency and accountability played important roles in cooperative learning lessons. To achieve success, students were required to use their social and conflict resolution skills. The final, key element was reflection. Allowing time for students to think about why they were or were not successful was crucial. Reflecting on learning encourages transfer to new situations.

High mobility was a problem for all three classrooms. New students were frequently being introduced to social skills already taught to the other students. Teacher researchers believe that the continued modeling and practicing in the intervention maintained the classroom environment in spite of the high mobility.

In reflecting upon the collection tools used in this intervention, some changes would be suggested. The only questions in the parent survey that provided useful information were the questions concerning the number of people in each household and previous experiences with organized social activities. Parent responses about behavior did not match student behavior observed in the classroom. Student surveys also yielded little information. Questions were too generalized. Students had too few experiences with

peers and could not evaluate their feelings well enough to be helpful. Group reflection logs were not used for data collection as first imagined in the research project. However, the logs were an important tool for the students. Reflecting as a group helped the students to understand the importance of working as a team to accomplish a goal. The Teacher Observation Checklist allowed researchers to quickly record student successes in each of the four targeted social skills. The checklist does leave room for teacher interpretation. Teacher observations should have been completed twice a week for the final three weeks of the intervention. An easier comparison of pretest and posttest data could have been possible. No changes are recommended for the use of the TALS or the Identifying and Labeling Emotions test. The lonely and confident faces in the emotions test were difficult for the students, but allowed researchers to find out which students had other labels beyond happy, mad, and sad.

The changes to the environment in the three classrooms has been so positive the teacher researchers feel cooperative learning has had more impact that anything else implemented in previous years. We will continue to implement the strategies of conflict resolution, cooperative learning, and teaching social skills. As the students become more accustom to working cooperatively, the frequency of its use will increase.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
(Teacher's Observation)

Teacher's Observation

Date _____

3 – Often
2 – Sometimes
1 – Seldom

SOCIAL SKILLS

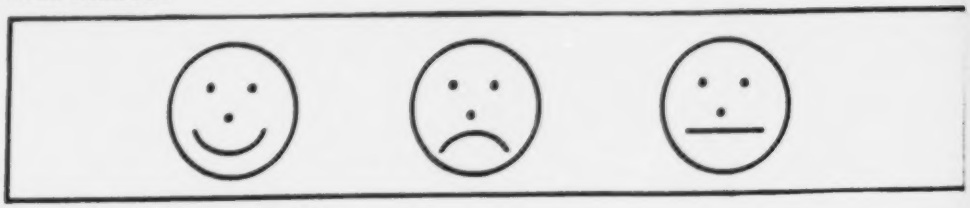
Student's Name	Listens to others Does not interrupt while others are talking	Shares with others Does not fight over material during group time	Completes their job within group	Talks appropriately with group members

APPENDIX B
(Student Survey)

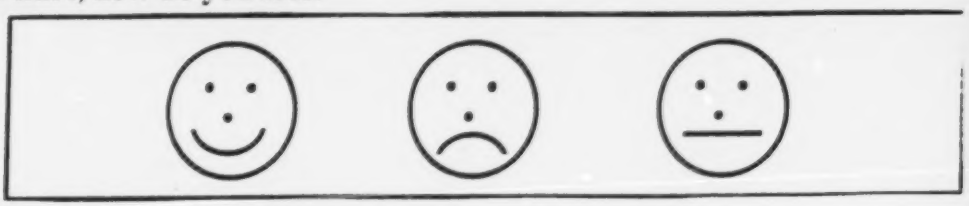
Student Survey

Name _____ **Date** _____

Do you like talking with others?

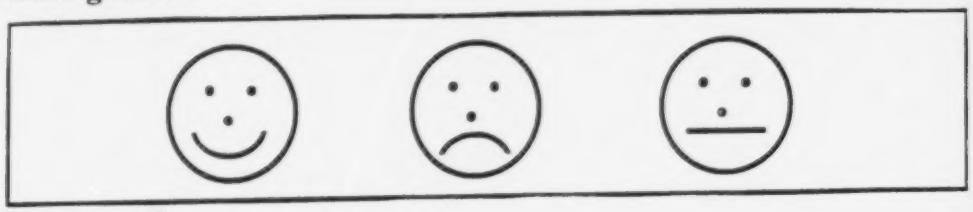


When someone gets hurt, how do you feel?

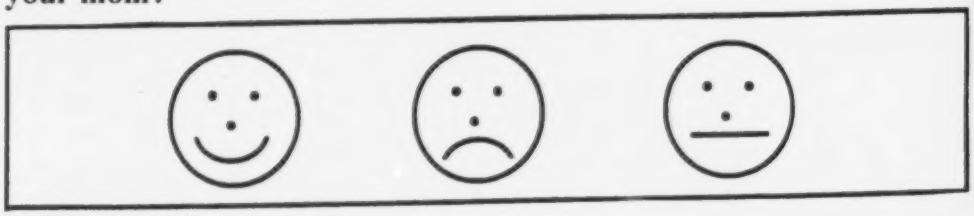


Do you like to play outside with friends?

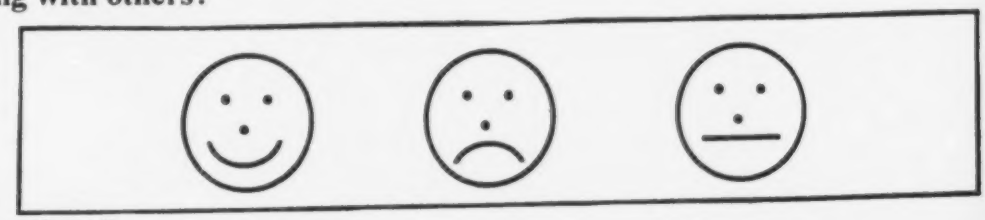
Do you like to play hand games?



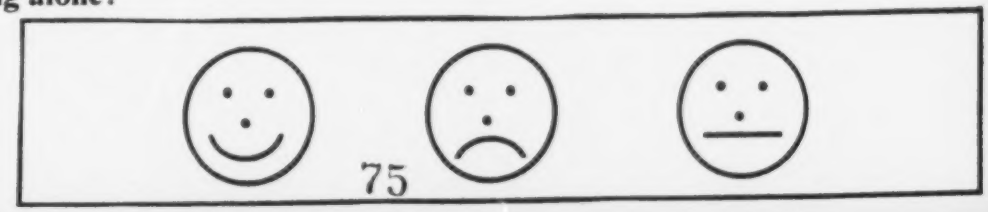
Do you like to help your mom?



Do you like working with others?



Do you like playing alone?



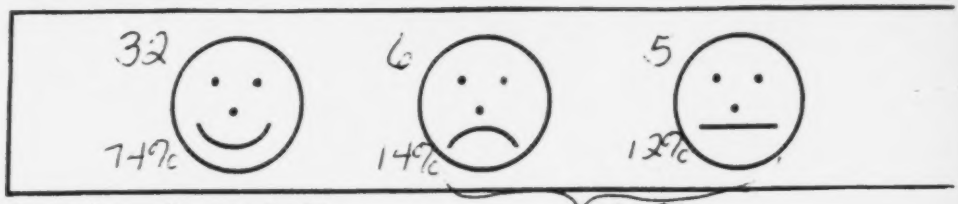
Pre Test totals All 3 Classrooms

Student Survey

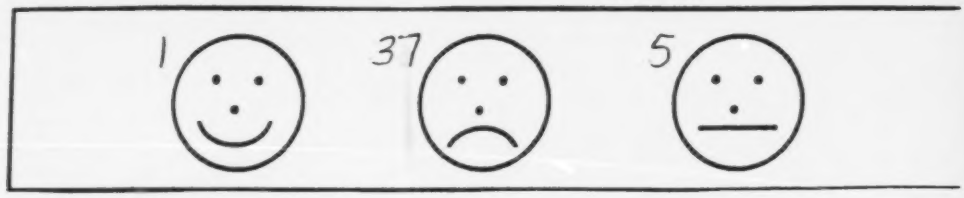
Name _____ **Date** _____

70

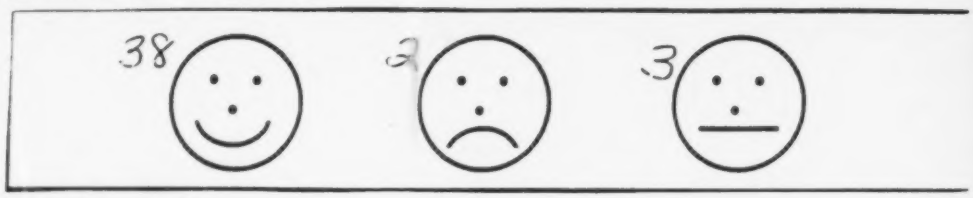
Do you like talking with others?



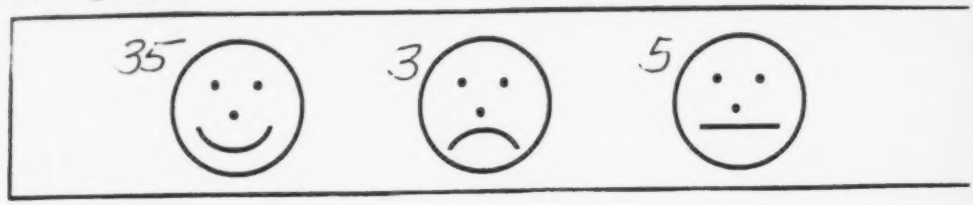
When someone gets hurt, how do you feel?



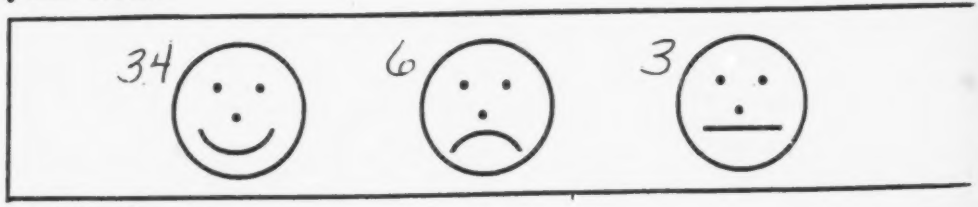
Do you like to play outside with friends?



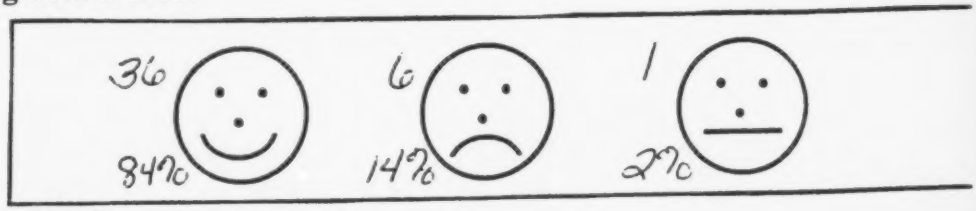
Do you like to play hand games?



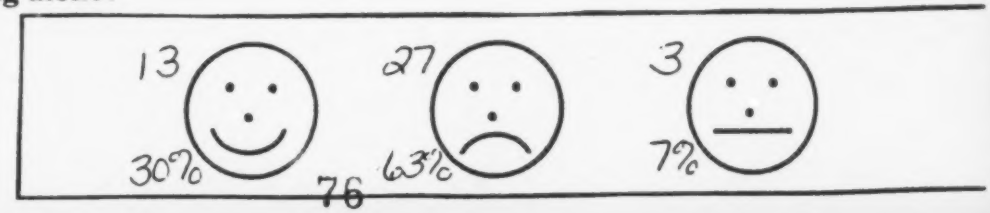
Do you like to help your mom?



Do you like working with others?



Do you like playing alone?



Post test totals

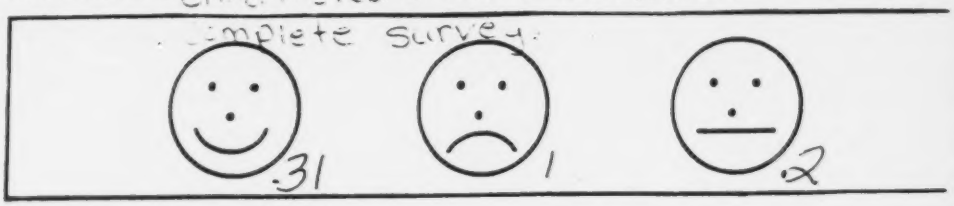
All 3 classrooms

Student Survey

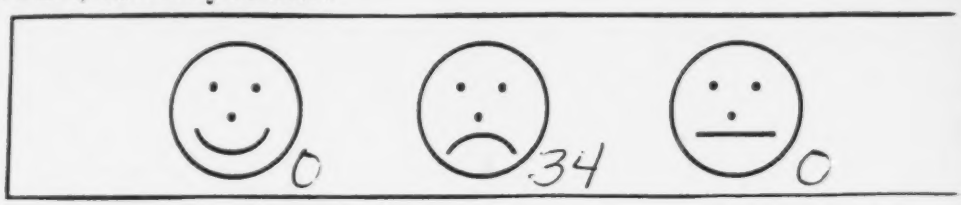
Name _____ **Date** _____

← 1 survey missing from classroom B. Child moved after intervention & did not complete survey.

Do you like talking with others?

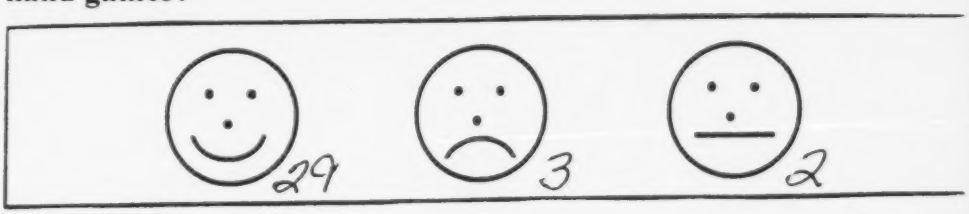


When someone gets hurt, how do you feel?

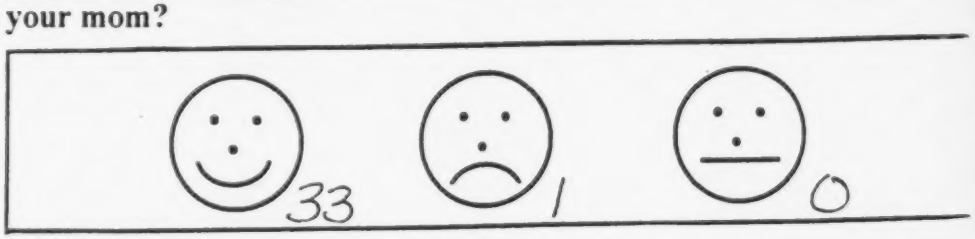


Do you like to play outside with friends?

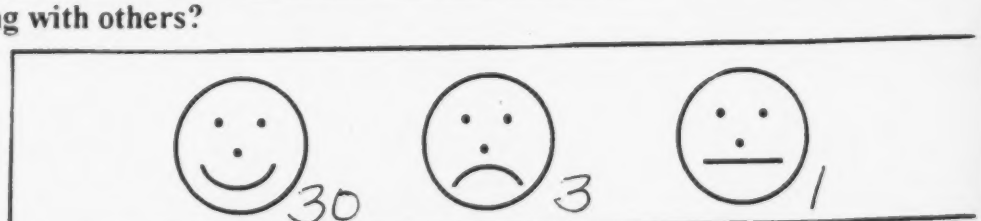
Do you like to play hand games?



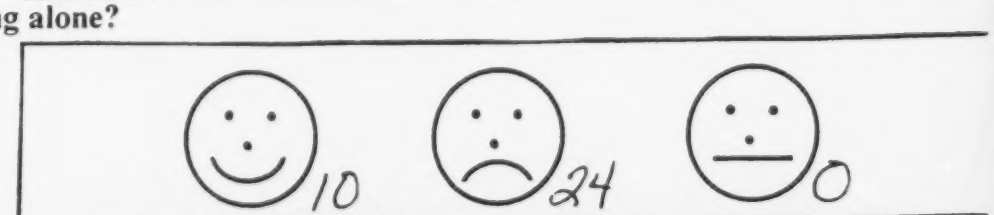
Do you like to help your mom?



Do you like working with others?



Do you like playing alone?



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APPENDIX C
(Identifying and Labeling Emotions)

Identifying and Labeling Emotions

Expressively/Receptively

+correctly identified - incorrectly identified

Names	Happy	Sad	Angry	Lonely	Frightened	Confident

Identifying and Labeling Emotions

Expressively/Receptively

correctly identified

Names	Happy	Sad	Angry	Lonely	Frightened	Confident
Classroom A Pretest						
	12 / 14	12 / 10	12 / 11	8 / 7	3 / 9	12 / 9
Classroom A Posttest						
	9 / 10	10 / 10	10 / 8	8 / 8	6 / 9	9 / 9
Classroom B Pretest						
	5 / 12	5 / 5	2 / 13	2 / 12	1 / 8	0 / 0
Classroom B Posttest						
	12 / 12	12 / 12	12 / 12	11 / 12	11 / 12	12 / 12
Classroom C Pretest						
	14 / 14	9 / 7	9 / 10	3 / 6	11 / 5	13 / 6
Classroom C Posttest						
	13 / 13	11 / 13	13 / 12	12 / 13	13 / 13	13 / 12

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APPENDIX D

(Sawyer's Test of Awareness of Language Segments)
TALS

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RECORD SHEET

Sawyer's Test of Awareness of Language Segments

For Ages 4 yr. 6 mo. and Older

76

Child _____ Classroom _____

Birthdate _____ Age _____ Test Date _____

Part A: Sentences-to-Words

1.	a. Mother called.	[+]	[−]
	b. I fell.	[+]	[−]
2.	a. Go home, John.	[+]	[−]
	b. Father works hard.	[+]	[−]
3.	a. Tomorrow is my birthday.	[+]	[−]
	b. Will you help me?	[+]	[−]
4.	a. Let's play a game together.	[+]	[−]
	b. When does the bus leave?	[+]	[−]
5.	a. What time does the program start?	[+]	[−]
	b. I can ride a bicycle fast.	[+]	[−]

(End testing for Part A here for ages 4 yr. 6 mo. to 5 yr. 6 mo.)

6.	a. The weather report said it will rain.	[+]	[−]
	b. Our cat just had five little kittens.	[+]	[−]
7.	a. Dad and Mom went to the store together.	[+]	[−]
	b. Uncle Bill flies a kite every Saturday afternoon.	[+]	[−]
8.	a. It rained so hard that we couldn't go home.	[+]	[−]
	b. Bill and Beth were happy to play the game.	[+]	[−]
9.	a. Mary didn't go to school today because she was sick.	[+]	[−]
	b. Bob always walks his dog in the park after school.		

Total Part A _____

(Total = number of correct responses *plus* number of (L) items where (a) was correct and (b) was therefore not tested.)

Part B: Words-to-Syllables *(Option. I for ages 5 yr. 7 mo. and beyond)*

1.	popcorn (pop-corn)	[+] [−]	6.	tomorrow (to-mor-row)	[+] [−]
2.	banana (ba-na-na)	[+] [−]	7.	window (win-dow)	[+] [−]
3.	rabbit (rab-bit)	[+] [−]	8.	telephone (tel-e-phone)	[+] [−]
4.	classroom (class-room)	[+] [−]	9.	football (foot-ball)	[+] [−]
5.	tiny (ti-ny)	[+] [−]	10.	baby (ba-by)	[+] [−]

Total Part B _____

Part C: Words-to-Sounds

1.	leaf	/lif/	(l-e-f)	[+] [−]
2.	dough	/doo/	(d-o)	[+] [−]
3.	pen	/pɛn/	(p-e-n)	[+] [−]
4.	wave	/weiv/	(w-a-v)	[+] [−]
5.	skate	/skeit/	(s-k-a-t)	[+] [−]
6.	sight	/sait/	(s-i-t)	[+] [−]

(End testing for Part C here for ages 4 yr. 6 mo. to 5 yr. 6 mo.)

7.	bought	/bɔt/	(b-o-t)	[+] [−]
8.	sew	/soo/	(s-o)	[+] [−]
9.	head	/hɛd/	(h-e-d)	[+] [−]
10.	rough	/rʌf/	(r-u-f)	[+] [−]
11.	tea	/ti/	(t-e)	[+] [−]
12.	fume	/fjum/	(f-u-m)	[+] [−]
13.	mule	/mjul/	(m-u-l)	[+] [−]
14.	note	/noot/	(n-o-t)	[+] [−]
15.	plan	/plæn/	(p-l-a-n)	[+] [−]
16.	cuff	/kʌf/	(c-u-f)	[+] [−]
17.	lamp	/læmp/	(l-a-m-p)	[+] [−]
18.	wrong	/rɔŋ/	(r-o-ng)(r-o-n-g)	[+] [−]

Total Part C _____

Total Test Score _____

82

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TALS

	High 18 - 26	Average 12 - 17	Low 0 - 11
Classroom A		///	~~////~~ ~~////~~ /
Classroom B	/	////	~~////~~ ~~////~~
Classroom C	//		~~////~~ ~~////~~ //
Totals	3	7	33

APPENDIX E
(Parent Survey)

Parent Survey

1. How many adults live in your household?
   A. 1
   B. 2
   C. 3
   D. 4
   E. More than 4

2. How many children live in your household?
   A. 1
   B. 2-3
   C. 4-6
   D. More than 6

3. After school, what activity does your child spend the most time doing?
   A. Playing outdoors
   B. Playing indoors
   C. Watching TV
   D. Reading or doing homework
   E. Other _____

4. Does your child attend:
   A. Boys and Girls Club
   B. Friendship House
   C. Growing Together
   D. Other _____
   E. None of the above

5. If given a choice would your child prefer to play:
   A. Alone
   B. With friends
   C. With an adult
   D. With brothers and sisters

6. When asked to share does your child:
   A. Want to
   B. Doesn't want to but will
   C. Refuses

7. When your child disagrees with a sibling or friend, how does he/she react?
   A. Tells someone
   B. Becomes angry
   C. No reaction

8. Which of these places does your child like to spend the most time?
   A. Home
   B. School
   C. Relative's home

9. How often is your child taken to places such as: the park, library, movies, DZ, Chuckie Cheese?
   A. Less than once a month
   B. Once a month
   C. Twice a month
   D. Once a week
   E. More than once a week

10. What forms of transportation do you regularly use?
   A. Own car
   B. Friend's/relative's car
   C. City bus

11. When playing, what kind of play does your child enjoy most (such as dolls, cars, house, video games, etc.)?

_____

Totals for all 3 classrooms

* 1 survey not returned

Parent Survey 81

1. How many adults live in your household?
   A. 1 - 26
   B. 2 - 9
   C. 3 - C
   D. 4 - 3
   E. More than 4 - 4

2. How many children live in your household?
   A. 1 - 3
   B. 2-3 - 22
   C. 4-6 - 16
   D. More than 6 - 1

3. After school, what activity does your child spend the most time doing?
   A. Playing outdoors - 20
   B. Playing indoors - 11
   C. Watching TV - 14
   D. Reading or doing homework - 16
   E. Other _____

4. Does your child attend:
   A. Boys and Girls Club - 3
   B. Friendship House - 4
   C. Growing Together - 2
   D. Other 2-church 1- youth center
   E. None of the above - 30

5. If given a choice would your child prefer to play:
   A. Alone - 3
   B. With friends - 31
   C. With an adult - 1
   D. With brothers and sisters - 18

   N/A - 1

6. When asked to share does your child:
   A. Want to - 30
   B. Doesn't want to but will - 12
   C. Refuses - 0

7. When your child disagrees with a sibling or friend, how does he/she react?
   A. Tells someone - 32
   B. Becomes angry - 10
   C. No reaction - 0

8. Which of these places does your child like to spend the most time?
   A. Home - 21
   B. School - 12
   C. Relative's home - 12
   N/A - 2

9. How often is your child taken to places such as: the park, library, movies, DZ, Chuckie Cheese?
   A. Less than once a month - 8
   B. Once a month - 8
   C. Twice a month - 16
   D. Once a week - 6
   E. More than once a week - 5

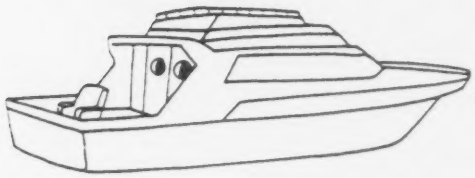
10. What forms of transportation do you regularly use?
   A. Own car - 23
   B. Friend's/relative's car - 11
   C. City bus - 13

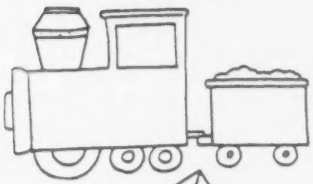
11. When playing, what kind of play does your child enjoy most (such as dolls, cars, house, video games, etc.)?

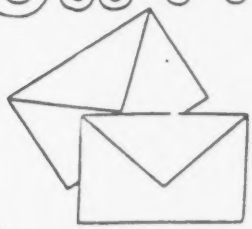
answers varied greatly

APPENDIX F
(People Search)

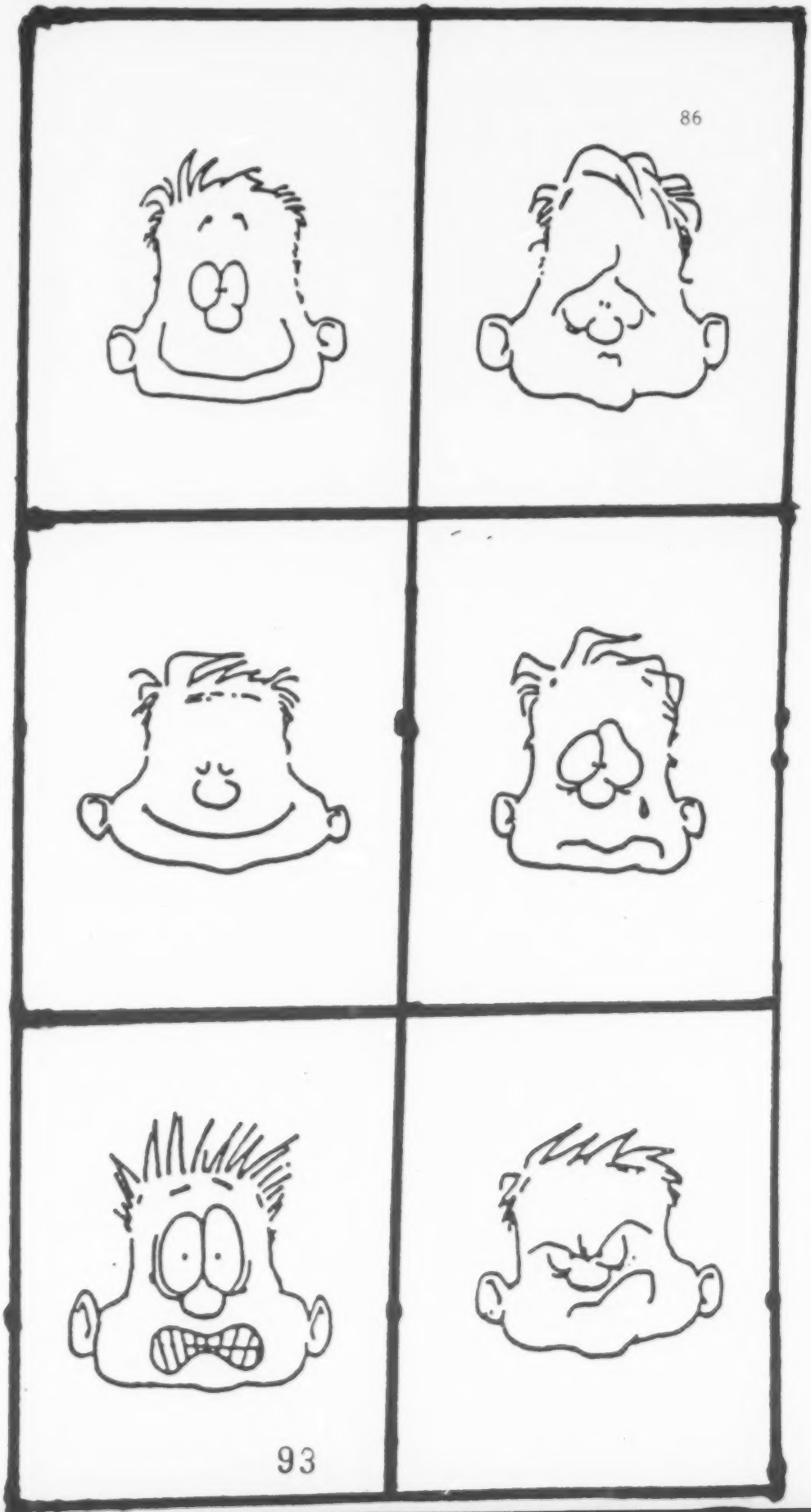
Who Uses This?







APPENDIX G
(Faces)


86
93